

MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

March 5, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Place: MDOT Auditorium

Commission Members Present:

**MS Department of Corrections
MS Emergency Management Agency
MS Highway Safety Patrol
MS National Guard
MS Association of Supervisors
MS Department of Environmental Quality
MS Department of Transportation
MS Association of Fire Chiefs
MS Office of Homeland Security
MS Department of Information Technology Services
MS Department of Health
MS Municipal League
MS Department of Public Safety**

**Chris Epps
Mike Womack
Michael Berthay
Gary Ladd
Steve Gray
Keith Harkins
Willie Huff
Tom Lariviere
Jay Ledbetter
David Litchliter
Mike Lucius
Quincy Mukoro
Stephen Simpson**

Advisory Members Present:

Chairman Epps called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and welcomed everyone.

Chairman Epps called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Tom Lariviere made the motion and it was seconded by Mike Lucius. The motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Epps recognized Daniel Cole, Panola County EMA Director, to provide information on the Panola County ACU1000 Pilot Program Implementation. Prior to the implementation, Panola County was unaware of the capabilities of the ACU1000 because the equipment they had was not being utilized due to a lack of training. They are now interoperable with Tate and DeSoto Counties (testing weekly), all dispatchers are adequately trained and there are some MOUs in place within the county (Sheriffs and Police Departments) stating what constitutes their patching the frequencies together. No MOUs exist with neighboring counties.

Questions from the floor disclosed that there was no cost to Panola County. Raytheon donated everything to the county (which would have cost 50-60K) and the only recurring cost they have is for monthly DSL Internet service which would have been needed for dispatch anyway. This implementation did not enhance coverage in the county except for the fact that they can talk to more people at one time. Vice-Chairman Womack indicated that this system has allowed them to use existing radios more effectively but is not a long term solution. State-wide roaming is not supported with this system. It is their intent to work with MSWIN even if it is in a limited capacity and they have already submitted a letter of intent to participate in the PSIC Grant Program.

Chairman Epps recognized Keith Harkins to report for the Procurement Review Committee. Mr. Harkins reported that the committee had one matter to come before the PRC from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks for a six month extension of their satellite radio

service. The PRC approved the request and submitted it for the Commission's consideration. Keith Harkins made the motion that the Commission approve and it was seconded by Commissioner Stephen Simpson. The motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Epps affirmed that Mr. Steve Gray, who represents the MS Association of Supervisors, will be the seventh member of the Procurement Review Committee so that local government is adequately represented.

Willie Huff reported for the Governance/Interoperability Committee and shared that the Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) Grant program is progressing with twenty-five letters of intent already received. Only three submissions were complete, but the Commission is following through with all contacts and will work through to make sure no one is left behind.

Willie Huff also noted that a workshop meeting should be set up, with all Commission members invited, to discuss issues of governance and P25 Phase 2 issues. Rules are being adopted by the APCO P25 standards group. Some rules are out for comment now and in the near future those standards will be set. The workshop is needed to discuss how the rules will affect our technology and our build out here.

Willie Huff then introduced Chief Walter Chatagner of the Department of Marine Resources. Chief Chatagner demonstrated that he was able to talk to his officers on the coast in Biloxi via radio. Their primary responsibility is the three (3) coastal counties but they also check on seafood shops throughout the State and patrol some 15 to 20 miles offshore, past Mississippi boundaries. They have been operating on the system a little over a year and it works. Chief Chatagner feels that when the system is completely built out, they will be able to communicate anywhere statewide on the MSWIN System.

Willie Huff also recognized Pam Hemphill with the *MEDCOM* Center at UMC who noted that in addition to the MSWIN system effectively covering land and water, air is also covered. Their helicopter communicates effectively using the MSWIN system. Thanks to the Commission and Motorola for their work in this area.

Willie Huff noted that while the Commission recognized the benefit of IT based gateway systems, the Commission would not support IT based gateway systems running in parallel competition with the MSWIN System. He emphasized that based on what was heard with the Panola County Pilot Implementation presentation that is beginning to happen in the north part of the State.

Chairman Epps thanked Mr. Bill Roach for attending the MEDCOM Center Press Conference in his stead and recognized Mr. Roach to give the Commission a Project Update. All of Phase 1A is in Wide Area Trunking and a pilot will begin in three (3) weeks with local government – two (2) counties at a time. Motorola is providing twenty (20) mobile radios to be used in the pilot. Local government will use the radios to ride around and test coverage in those areas. They should be impressed with the coverage.

Phase1B towers are all up, shelters are set and equipment is loaded in most. Three (3) sites in Jones and Covington Counties are up and in Site Trunking today. As soon as microwave links are on, they can be added to Wide Area Trunking and Jones County will be included in the pilot. All of Phase 1C is in Site Lock, except for one (1) site. There are two (2) towers already standing with shelters installed and equipment is loaded in one of these. All of Phase 1 will be up and operational by June 30, 2009.

Phase 2A, the two paths and a loop around the Jackson Metropolitan Area, will be operational in mid-summer 2009 with Phases 2B, 2C, and 2D to follow. All of Phase 2 will be operational by March 2010 and Phase 3 complete by December of 2010 with funding.

Mr. Litchliter provided a report on the monthly expenditures. He noted expenditures of \$238,265.42 for the month of February with a balance of \$2,979,312.40 and that Motorola invoices totaling \$4M are currently being held pending additional funding.

Mr. Roach reported that they met with the Bond Commission two weeks ago and they released the other \$10M from the \$20M bond bill passed in 2007. The bonds will probably not be sold until late April or May. They were also told that the first \$20M from the MSICG (Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant) will be available by the end of March. The WCC is preparing the Project Definition for the second \$20M (MSICG) and expects to receive those funds in mid-summer or early fall. The \$50M will take us to the end of the 2009 fiscal year. It should pay Motorola invoices for all of Phase 2A, possibly pay utilities through the end of the year, and prep work for Phase 3.

Chairman Epps noted that the \$50M grant bill passed the Senate and is in the House. David Litchliter informed the commission that the Ellis Bond (\$30M) did not make it past the deadline. A marker was put in for the WCC in larger bond bill (HB 1722). Mr. Litchliter emphasized that the \$50M in the ITS Appropriation Bill is not an appropriation. It is an authority to spend meaning there must be available cash to exercise it. It allows a \$50M spending authority without budget categories with an option to escalate to cover any other funding that might come to the WCC.

Vice-Chairman Womack asked about the purchase of subscriber units. Mr. Roach explained that payment schedules are set up for the purchase of subscriber units at the end of each phase. Right now the focus is on building the infrastructure. All subscriber units for the total project will total approximately \$34M.

The next meeting will be April 2, 2009, in the MDOT Auditorium at 1:30 PM.

Willie Huff made a motion to adjourn and Vice-Chairman Mike Womack seconded the motion. The motion passed with none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:25 PM.